



**STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT**

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

**STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT OF
GENERAL JACOB L. DEVERS**

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MATTHEW J. BROWN
United States Army

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:
Approved for Public Release.
Distribution is Unlimited.

USAWC CLASS OF 2001



U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050

20010430 138

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL JACOB L. DEVERS

By

LTC MATTHEW J. BROWN
U. S. ARMY

Col Frank Hancock
Project Advisor

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:
Approved for public release.
Distribution is unlimited.

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: LTC Matthew J. Brown

TITLE: Strategic Leadership Assessment of General Jacob L. Devers

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 10 April 2001

PAGES: 23

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

General Jacob L. Devers is a tremendous historical example of a strategic leader. His background, which combined a blend of formal schooling, training, experience, and responsibility, earned him a distinguished career as an Army officer, military administrator, and World War II commander. One of the very few Allied Army Group Commanders in World War II, Devers worked immediately under General Eisenhower on the same level as General Bradley and Field Marshal Montgomery. He successfully directed two armies throughout the campaigns in Western Europe from the invasion of Southern France to the end of the war. History books credit him with doing more than his share toward the Allied victory of World War II. He served as a senior US military representative in a major theater of operation and won praise from the allied high commands for his ability to deal effectively with the British and the French. This paper identifies and analyzes the strategic leadership competencies of General Devers from early childhood through his distinguished military career by using as a frame of reference, The Strategic Leadership Primer, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, U.S. Army War College and U.S. Army Field Manual, 22-100, Army Leadership.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL JACOB L. DEVERS	1
STRATEGIC LEADER COMPETENCIES	2
BACKGROUND.....	3
EARLY DEVELOPMENT.....	4
EARLY MILITARY CAREER.....	5
ARMORED FORCE.....	7
EUROPEAN THEATER OPERATIONS (ETO) AND COALITION COMMAND	8
CONCLUSION.....	12
ENDNOTES.....	13
BIBLIOGRAPHY	17

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL JACOB L. DEVERS

Since coalition forces fought side by side throughout the European Theater of Operation in World War II, competent coalition commanders who were integral to the success of the Allied effort led many of these forces. One such commander was General Jacob L. Devers of York, Pennsylvania (Pa). Devers was an Allied Group Commander who served immediately under General Dwight D. Eisenhower and was on the same tier of command structure as General Omar Bradley and Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery. Even though General Devers was equivalent to Bradley and Montgomery, he failed to attract the public attention and acclaim generated by these officers. His relative obscurity may stem from the fact that he shied from publicity. It may also be attributed to the fact that he missed combat in World War I while many of his contemporaries who saw combat made their mark during World War I.¹ Nonetheless, Devers successfully directed two armies throughout the campaigns in Western Europe from the invasion of southern France to the end of the war.

Devers was long rated in inner circles as perhaps the best organizer and fast action executive in the Army.² In Assembly, a publication of The Association of Graduates of the United States Military Academy, the military paid tribute to one of its' finest with this single obituary:

Jake Devers: Patriot, dedicated soldier, astute commander, humble man with a multitude of friends. Among his greatest admirers and supporters were those officers and enlisted men who were privileged to serve his command.³

Why has General Devers been almost unknown to the general public? Never flamboyant, quiet, rarely wrong in his judgment, he seldom sparked controversy.⁴ Noted historian Professor Russell F. Weigley even stated that General Devers was too much of a gentleman to downgrade other generals like some of his contemporaries.⁵ The intent of this paper is to look into the life of Jacob (Jake) Devers and extract those strategic leadership competencies that placed him among the foremost successful military men of his time. The format for the paper is to describe the strategic leadership competencies mentioned in Army Field Manual 22-100, Army Leadership, and The Strategic Leadership Primer, give a brief historical background of Devers' life, and then focus primarily on the assessment of those strategic leadership competencies developed in his early years and demonstrated throughout his distinguished military service. This paper will show that even though Devers avoided the sensational attention during his military career, he still possessed many of the outstanding strategic leadership skills needed of senior military leaders.

STRATEGIC LEADER COMPETENCIES

According to Army Field Manual 22-100, Army Leadership, strategic leaders are the Army's highest-level thinkers, war-fighters, and political-military experts.⁶ In general, they must have conceptual, technical, and interpersonal competencies. These competencies are the learned or acquired skills, knowledge, attributes, and capacities that allow a leader to perform and accomplish required tasks at the strategic level. Key requirements include the ability for creative and integrated thinking in an uncertain environment. Success depends on the ability to deal with the complex, understand the organization's operating systems, and build consensus and systems to achieve strategic goals.⁷

Strategic leader conceptual competency is the ability to think clearly of the consequences of actions in terms of effects over time. Gen Devers conceptual thinking skills developed at an early age and were constantly challenged by the complex world of the 1930's and 1940's. An understanding of second and third order effects was necessary by Devers to resist actions that to the Army appeared reasonable in the short term but were detrimental in the long run. Key components of conceptual competency are the ability to envision and anticipate for the future, frame of reference development, and problem management.⁸

Strategic leader technical competency is the ability to establish conditions that maximize the effectiveness of the organization and formulate effective national objectives and strategic interests.⁹ It also involves an understanding of the complex nature of joint and combined operations. As a coalition commander during World War II, Devers learned the importance of working together with allies in a multinational environment in order to gain the understanding and commitment of his American, British and French subordinates. Technical competency skills include leveraging technology to obtain an advantage, understanding joint and combined relationships, and translating political goals into military objectives.

Strategic leader interpersonal skills include the ability to build consensus within an organization, the ability to negotiate with external agencies, and the ability to communicate internally and externally.¹⁰ Just as Devers' technical competencies were challenged when dealing with the French Forces, his interpersonal competencies with the components of consensus building, negotiation skills, and effective communication, were routinely tested during his coalition command efforts. Devers' negotiation and consensus building skills were key to building a strong relationship with the French.

BACKGROUND

As mentioned earlier, General Devers, despite being a four- star World War II General, appears relatively unknown to the public. But who was this individual and what motivated him to such lofty heights? With that thought in mind, it is appropriate to briefly recount Devers many lifetime achievements and accomplishments in order to understand and analyze his leadership competencies. Where did he acquire the principles and skills that brought success to him?

Jacob Devers was born on September 8th, 1887, in York, Pa. After distinguishing himself in high school as class president and local sports star, he enrolled in West Point. While at West Point, Devers played varsity basketball and baseball and finished thirty-ninth out of a class of 103 cadets in the class of 1909. Some of his classmates were George Patton, William Simpson and Robert Eichelberger, all of whom became four-star generals in World War II. Devers would outrank them all in terms of command responsibility. Devers was commissioned in the Field Artillery and early assignments were at Ft Sill and West Point as an artillery instructor, Hawaii, and Washington D.C. In 1939, Army Chief of Staff, General George Marshall, impressed by Devers outstanding performance, recalled him to D.C in the spring of 1940 and promoted him over 474 other colonels as the U.S. Army's youngest brigadier general. Devers then served on President Roosevelt's Board for selection of Naval bases in the Atlantic. In October 1940, Devers was promoted to Major General and sent to Ft Bragg, North Carolina, to command the Ninth Infantry Division. During his stay at Bragg, the post strength grew from three thousand to seventy thousand. He supervised the gigantic building program and ran an intense training program for draftees and National Guard troops.¹¹

His superb performance led to his selection by Marshall as the Chief of the Armored Force at Fort Knox with responsibility for expanding armored divisions during the time of its buildup for World War II. The Armored Force expanded from four to twelve armored divisions in twenty months.¹² The main challenge of the Armored Force was to create a modern tank that could compete with the German models. In May 1943, Devers was sent to London to command the Europe Theater of Operations. He trained the million-man invasion force for the 1944 crossing of the English Channel and in January 1944 he replaced General Eisenhower as Commander of the North African Theater of Operations in the Mediterranean. In September 1944, he assumed command of the Sixth Army Group which included General Patch's Seventh U.S. Army and the French First Army of General de Lattre de Tassignay. The later force was the largest French Force ever amassed under any foreign military leader.¹³ His Allied Forces helped create a diversionary invasion of Southern France seventy days after the Normandy Invasion and their successes provided the vital supply and relief forces needed to bolster the Allied push

into Germany in March 1945. Only five World War II officers of the U.S. Army surpassed Devers in rank to become Five Star Generals; Marshall, MacArthur, Eisenhower, Arnold and Bradley.¹⁴ When the war in Europe was over, General Devers came home to command the Army Ground Forces at Fort Monroe, Virginia.

With forty years of faithful service behind him, Devers retired in September 1949 at the age of 62. Devers died on October 15th, 1979, at the age of ninety-two. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT

All leaders build a knowledge structure over time from schooling, experience, self study, and reflection. For the strategic leader, this knowledge structure acts as a basis of observation and judgment. Even at an early age, Jake Devers demonstrated leadership attributes which were essential in developing his conceptual skills, values, and building his personal frame of reference.

While Devers never intended to become a part of his father's jewelry business while growing up, he learned the value of perseverance from his father. As a young man Devers accompanied his father in the maintenance of the clock high above the York County Court House. Every Sunday for two years, he and his dad would climb the steep ladder to the roof and check the acid/water mixture in the batteries that ran this clock. His father insisted that the timepiece must be correct to the second and when his dad was not available to perform on a particular Sunday, Jake handled the duty himself. From his father's career, he always remembered the lessons of attention to detail in performing any chore no matter how mundane the job, and following through on a project to its completion.¹⁵

Also, as a youngster, Jake worked a few jobs in the neighborhood to earn some spending money. One summer he worked in a local silk mill.

When I worked for my grandfather on the farm, he said he would pay the wages that I was worth in comparison with the other farmer boys. I never forgot that experience. They were paid \$1.75 for the day and he only gave me \$.75. I considered that I worked as hard, if not harder, as anybody in that group. To this day I'm a little more careful what kind of contracts I make when I go to work. I would say I worked hard. That was my family's philosophy-on both sides, and it rubbed off on me.¹⁶

In his spare time, Devers concentrated on sports. He was fond of football and baseball but basketball was his passion. He spent countless hours at the YMCA studying the moves of good players, learning visually to improve his game. It was there that Jake first showed his natural leadership ability in sports. Also, during high school, one of his teachers personally

tutored him in many languages. He studied Latin, German, Spanish, and later French. French was his most difficult subject in school and this would later in life comeback to haunt him during the war years when he commanded the French armies in the drive for the Mediterranean to the Rhine.¹⁷ However, Devers desire to be open and eager to learn at an early age were integral to his conceptual development thinking.

Jake Devers became an Army officer and West Point cadet because West Point won an important football game in 1904, and because there were a lot of dumb Republicans in his hometown.¹⁸ Devers had originally enrolled after high school to Lehigh University. His father was an active Democrat in a then Republican York County. The local Republican Congressman asked Jake's father if he knew anyone who wanted to go to West Point because the previous year all the appointed sons of solid Republicans had flunked out. The Congressman was ready to try a Democrat. Devers showed no interest at first but attended an Army football game in Philadelphia and was so thrilled by Army's brilliant win that day that he decided to join the Army and West Point.¹⁹

What did Devers gain from his experience at West Point? He summarized it in his own words: "I think the greatest thing West Point did for me was to develop my physical posture, and firmed up the values that count in the world; being prompt, hard work, being accurate, always truthful, and when you get a job to do, whether you like it or not, give it your best effort."²⁰

These few examples during Devers early development years show the conceptual leader attributes of being open to new experiences, willing to try new experiences, values, reflection, and commitment. Leadership attributes that are key to conceptual thinking and are important to a leader for building a good frame of reference.

EARLY MILITARY CAREER

Devers conceptual and technical competencies development was enhanced by his early assignments and responsibilities in the Field Artillery branch. He dutifully served as an instructor at Ft Sill and West Point. Even though he did not go to Europe for World War I, upon reflection, he probably gained by not getting into the war, what with all the personal enrichment he received in instructional experience in a wide variety of subjects relative to artillery.²¹

As a Colonel and Chief of the Artillery School of Fire in the 1920's, he was fascinated by innovative ideas. At Ft Sill, he developed techniques that allowed artillery units to fire for effect much sooner than had been the case previously. Devers worked with the 4.7inch gun. This gun was another mobile weapon that proved to be a good gun, but in Devers opinion it had substandard ammunition. The challenge for Devers was to develop gun systems and manage

the gun-ammunition issues leading to the desired outcome of fielded gun systems by not rushing into a short-term deal that in the long run could be detrimental to the artillery. Devers recommended a better working relationship between developers of guns and ammunition to solve the issue and avoid future problems. He leveraged the available growing improvements in the technology of the day to obtain a military advantage. He did this by managing the substandard 4.7inch ammunition problem by insisting the developers make quality ammunition first, then concentrating on a means to effectively shoot it.²²

When Devers took charge of the just-emerging Ninth Infantry Division in 1940 at Ft Bragg, his major responsibilities included the housing, clothing, and training of 53,000 troops. During his nine month stay, the number of personnel handled at Ft Bragg rose dramatically, as he directed an extensive buildup program along with streamlining training procedures for draftees and National Guard troops. The result became a prime example of his leadership ability to decentralize responsibility, freeing subordinates from his direct control.²³ This assignment proved him to be adept at both building a new post and a new division at the same time. Devers unique interpersonal skills and ability to build consensus amongst the post engineers, local contractors, constructing quartermaster and staff enabled the post to contribute as a training center for the war buildup. "Let's forget all that red tape," he said, "we can catch up with that later...Let's iron out all problems every day face to face right here."²⁴ Devers created a team that in six months completed more than 2500 buildings and 93 miles of paved roads. How can this amazing accomplishment be explained? In the words of Devers, "Our policy was a simple one: Recognize the wonderful talents of the men and women at hand, and give them jobs and responsibilities within their capabilities."²⁵

At Ft Bragg, Devers successfully communicated the post building vision between the military, skeptical media, and town locals. By using dialogue to thoroughly exchange points of view, assumptions, and concepts, strategic leaders gather information, clarify issues, and earn the support of peers and subordinates.²⁶ Devers invited skeptical local writers to review and inspect the problems areas themselves and report their personal findings both to Devers and the general public.²⁷ When articles went to print, these writers wrote mostly glowing reports on their findings, thanks to honesty and the expeditious solving of these previous problems areas. Or in the words of Devers, "Our policy was to give the facts as we saw them; if they indicated bad judgment had been used or stupidity displayed, we did not hide the facts. If initiate or imagination had been used, we commended the individual responsible for it."²⁸

ARMORED FORCE

His ability to get things done led General George Marshall, the acting Army Chief of Staff in 1941, to select Devers to head the Armored Forces training center at Ft Knox. With the situation in Europe and Asia becoming more threatening, the armored forces were expanding rapidly and undergoing numerous changes. The U.S Army at this time lagged considerably behind other nations and was trying to create and shape an armored force that could compete with the German blitzkrieg. In helping to fashion the organization and doctrine of that new combination of arms, Devers played a significant role. He fostered the increased use and development of self-propelled artillery, more and better medium tanks, and improved tank engines, suspension systems and design. As Head of the Armored Force, Devers proved to be a competent administrator and an exponent of the newly emerging combined arms doctrine. The tank-infantry-artillery-close support aircraft team that the U.S. Army later wielded so adeptly emerged out of Devers' Armored Force.²⁹ The Armored Forces expanded from four to twelve armored divisions in just twenty months. Lieutenant General George S. Patton Jr., as tough and able a fighting man as there was, told a tank platoon just before the African invasion: "Thanks to General Devers, we are ready."³⁰

FM 22-100 states "strategic leaders seek to determine what is important now and what will be important in the future."³¹ In an interview with historian Professor Russell Weigley, he feels the best examples of General Devers strategic leadership competencies were during his assignment as Chief of the Armored Force. Weigley felt Devers demonstrated superb conceptual and technical skills while building this force during a difficult and changing world. An example of his technical and conceptual skills as Chief of the Armored Force was his involvement with fielding a new tank. Devers was truly an outstanding organizer and his hard work and dedication produced impressive results.³²

Once war broke out in Europe, the Army hastily developed the first medium tank in 1940, the M3 Grant. Britain used the M3 in North Africa and the U.S. used the M3 against the Germans in 1942 in Tunisia. But Devers felt the tank had several drawbacks: excessive weight, position of its guns, and lack of armor piercing firepower.³³ Devers knew a better tank was needed if the Allies were to prevail in the struggle for armored superiority. As head of the project, his aim was to show that the tank is nothing but a mechanism to carry firepower to the enemy position, utilizing mobility for tactical and strategic purpose.³⁴ Devers, as a strategic leader, knew what was important now and in the future. He envisioned only light and medium tanks for the U.S. and felt that even though the Germans were successful with heavy tanks in North Africa, they would require special bridges to be mobile for the terrain in Europe. By

September 1941 after much testing and experimentation, a new tank was developed, the M4 Sherman. This tank rolled off the assembly line and became the most successful Allied tank of the war.³⁵ The M4 was successful in large part to Devers traveling to Detroit and exchanging technical points of view about tank engines with the Chrysler and General Motors manufacturers. Devers and his staff communicated their required tank engine specifications while the manufacturers told them what they could realistically produce for a new engine in the appropriate timetable. With unprecedented cooperation and concessions, deadlines were met and tank engines produced quickly to satisfy the war effort. For example, dialogue between manufacturers and the Army eventually changed the 75mm gun of the Sherman to a 76.2mm gun, giving it more penetrating power as a tank destroyer. As Chief of the Armored Force, General Devers always felt that the best tank destroyer is a better tank.³⁶ His leadership competency of leveraging technology to obtain a military advantage and conceptual thinking of knowing what would be important in the future gave the U.S. Armored Forces overwhelming combat power in World War II.

EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (ETO) AND COALITION COMMAND

In 1943 General Marshall selected Devers, now a Lieutenant General, to command the European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army (ETOUSA). As Commanding General, reorganization of ETOUSA became his first priority and a superb example of Devers interpersonal skills. FM 22-100 states "Strategic leaders, when building staffs, have not only the authority but also the responsibility to pick the best people for their staffs. They seek to put the right people in the right places."³⁷ Thus, the reorganization of the ETOUSA and its staff headquarters followed the old Devers philosophy of a lean, mobile headquarters: choose a staff small in numbers and full of capable people you have employed before; select a sufficient number of young officers who have the stamina to work long hours.³⁸

The European Theater of Operations handled the administration of services and supplies, training and availability of relief forces, and planning and execution of missions of the European front. The European Theater was familiar to Devers because from December 1942 to January 1943 he led a team to examine the progress of the weapons systems employed in the ETO in relation to their effectiveness to the war. Devers possessed a well-developed frame of reference which gave him a thorough understanding of systems and their interacting process. His study concluded that the M4 Sherman tank and self-propelled 105mm howitzer were the best in the field at the time; hostile air power must be rendered ineffective for war victory; tank destroyers as a separate entity are not practical.³⁹ Previous assignments and experiences of

Devers at Ft Bragg and Ft Knox helped him develop a comprehensive frame of reference on weapons systems and made him the logical choice for ETOUSA commander. Thus, Devers possessed a well-developed frame of reference which gave him a thorough understanding of systems and their interacting process.⁴⁰

During his time as ETO Commander and later as the Sixth Army Group Commander, his leadership competencies of interpersonal and technical skills became most apparent. As ETO Commander, General Devers served as General Marshall's representative in dealings and decisions involving the British allies. His role was to make sure Allied operational forces were receiving all the available resources. Additionally, he supervised the American rearming and re-equipping of the French Army and Air Force which had begun under Eisenhower in North Africa, and thus gained valuable insights about forces he would later command. This task called on him to constantly solve questions of conflicting priorities for re-armament between French Forces and other allied units. With little guidance from Washington and the War Department, Devers handled this situation with aplomb and success, once again catching Marshall's eye.⁴¹

In this difficult position of being a coalition commander, he earned the respect of the French leaders for his easy-going but fair attitude in dealing with them and being sensitive to the proud feelings of the French and their desire to redeem the honor they had lost in 1940. By understanding the complexities of joint and combined relationships, Devers mastered the ability to operate in a multinational environment and gained the full understanding and commitment of his subordinates. The contribution made by General Devers (and one too often overlooked) was his effectiveness in dealing with the other services and with foreign leaders. Whether he dealt with naval representatives in Britain, air force commanders in Italy, or French and American generals in Europe, his firm, yet fair-minded approach to problems gained him their respect.⁴²

As the 6th Army Group commander, which consisted of the US Seventh Army and the French First Army, General Devers had an outstanding grasp of joint and combined relationships. The conflicting political, economic, and military problems and objectives of each of the Allied powers was a problem for him as well as many of the theater commanders. Devers was not comfortable with the politics involved in fighting a war supported by many nationalities, and with the need to stroke bruised egos to get to the solution of a problem. Devers wrote, "In determining a course of action under a directive received, the theater commanders must bear in mind that he has under command professional soldiers and experienced commanders of several nations other than his own, who owe their first allegiance to their own governments and to the views of their own national chiefs of staff."⁴³ He goes on to say "It is only natural that

representatives of another nation will examine critically every directive received and decision taken by the theater commander from the viewpoint of their own national aspiration, political, economic, and military.”⁴⁴

General Devers was skilled, but often challenged, at reaching consensus and building and sustaining coalitions. He felt allied forces in war always accept the common, broad objectives of destruction of the hostile power but when the question of ways, means and methods arises, national aspirations and characteristics come to the forefront. He believed it is unreasonable to expect the military representatives of nations who are serving under unified command in combined operations will subordinate promptly and freely their own views to those of a commander of another nationality, unless the commander, through professional skill, good judgment, tact, and patience, has convinced them that it is to their national interests individually and collectively.⁴⁵

Devers technical competencies were challenged when dealing with the French. Like Eisenhower, Devers made coalition warfare work, but in some respects his coalition was very difficult. Devers primary problem as a coalition commander was that of controlling the French Forces later in the war. The French were troublesome allies burning to redress their earlier defeat and Devers had difficulty keeping them reined in tightly. During the height of the German winter offensive in the Ardennes in December 1944, Eisenhower ordered Devers to withdraw the First French Army from Strasbourg, which they had just liberated, in order to shorten his supply lines and give him the forces needed to eliminate the German Army in the region. Such a move left Strasbourg susceptible to German re-occupation and Devers was sensitive to the political implications of the action. Devers attempted to convince Eisenhower that he had sufficient forces to accomplish his mission without giving up Strasbourg. Eisenhower refused Devers' plea and ordered him to go ahead with the withdrawal. Devers issued orders to the French Army for the action and the French authorities immediately challenged the order. Free French leader, Charles de Gaulle, went to Eisenhower and argued the French case. When Eisenhower refused to change his mind, de Gaulle countered that as head of the French Provisional Government he would withdraw the French Forces from Eisenhower” and Devers control. Eisenhower needed the French and had no immediate leverage over de Gaulle, so he cancelled his order to withdraw.⁴⁶

Army Leadership states, “Strategic leaders must synchronize the efforts of all to attain those conditions and achieve the end state envisioned by political leaders.”⁴⁷ A good example of Devers consensus building skills was his involvement with the American and British views on the decision of the Balkan's region as a primary or secondary route to Germany for the invasion

of Europe. Since Britain's economic and political future at the time was so closely bound to the Balkans by history through the Mediterranean area, it was naturally their choice. In contrast, Devers perceived a problem from a military strategy point of view with that approach. The British and the Americans were in complete agreement on the ultimate objective for the European invasion but there was a great difference of opinion on the intermediate objectives and routes. There were some on the British side who felt just as intensely as did the Americans that the main blow must come through western France, and the secondary blow through the south of France. On the other hand, there were some on the American side who felt that the main blow must come through western France that the secondary effort must come through the Balkans and northern Italy. The French, however, wanted none of the Balkans or the Italian approach.⁴⁸ When these conflicts of opinion extended to General Devers, he was confronted with the most delicate challenge of reconciling all political and military opinion to his views, in order to build consensus for the pursuit of the ultimate objective of destroying Germany.

Toward the end of the war and during his final assignment as Commander of Army Ground Forces, Devers gave many speeches and presentations on such topics as coalition command, the Army's future role, and the political-military environment. In a particular speech to the Naval War College in May 1948, Devers told the students "It is no longer possible to deal with the role of land forces in a future conflict without including, at the same time, consideration of the roles of the Navy and Air Force."⁴⁹ "The mission of each major service is inseparable from the missions of the other two. It is foreseeable that air power will play an even greater role in a future war than it did in the last."⁵⁰

Devers also expressed strong feelings about new technology and its effect on Army tactics and techniques in future wars. "First of all, we cannot ignore the atom. The atom strikes not directly at the Army, but at an intangible of transcendent importance- our national will to fight."⁵¹ He also stated "If we can locate accurately, by electronic means, the enemy's guns, we can silence them and insure our success. Television has many possibilities as a target locator and as an aid in reconnaissance."⁵² All of these remarks demonstrate Devers strategic conceptual and technical skills. As a strategic leader, he was realistically looking at what the future may hold and seeking to determine what will be important in the future. Devers knew that technological change allows the military to do the things they do better and faster, but also enables them to do things that were not possible before.

CONCLUSION

With forty years of faithful service behind him, General Devers retired in September 1949, at the age of sixty-two. At his retirement ceremony at Fort McNair, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge paid tribute to his friend with these glowing remarks:

I would rather be in the general's tent the night before the battle than to hear his speech the day after the victory. There were never any speeches after victories, but those who were in General Devers tent the night before the battle can testify that being there was a reassuring experience. Here is a soldier who commanded about 700,000 in battle. He is indeed the very archetype of the man on whom the Nation completely and utterly depends when its life hangs on the balance.⁵³

When considering all of his achievements throughout his life, the sheer scope of his leadership competencies, and his input to the Army and military, Devers must be regarded as an effective strategic leader and a leader worth studying and emulating. Even though Devers never enjoyed the fame accorded other top military leaders, he still possessed the conceptual, technical, and interpersonal skills needed of senior leaders. Devers early development years showed the conceptual leader attributes of being open to new experiences, willing to take risks, values, and the importance of commitment. Key conceptual attributes whereby Devers built a good frame of reference. His early military career focused more on conceptual and technical competencies with important assignments and responsibilities as instructor, Chief of Artillery, and Chief of the Armored Force. While at Fort Sill and Fort Knox, he successfully leveraged artillery and armor technology to obtain military advantages for both the 4.7inch gun and the medium tank. Devers senior military years, as ETO and coalition Army Group Commander, demonstrated his outstanding interpersonal and technical competencies. Despite challenges by the French Forces who worked under his tactical directive, Devers discharged duties of awesome responsibility during the war and carved a remarkable niche for himself among the commanders of World War II.⁵⁴

A final story may sum up General Devers best. He was one of several distinguished, retired officers attending a conference at the Pentagon in the 1960's and a West Point cadet asked him if he ever commanded an army. Instead of launching into battle stories that would have impressed the young man, he simply smiled and said, "Actually, I commanded several."⁵⁵

WORD COUNT: 5880

ENDNOTES

¹ Martin Blumenson, Masters of the Art of Command (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 193.

² Alfred A. Knopf, These are the Generals (New York: Curtis Publishing Press, 1943), 110.

³ Michael A. Markey, Jake, the General from West York Avenue (York: Historical Society of York County, 1998), 113.

⁴ Blumenson, 173.

⁵ Professor Russell F. Weigley, interview by author, 22 January 2001, Carlisle, PA.

⁶ Department of the Army, Army Leadership, Army Regulation 22-100 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 31 August 1999), 7-1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Roderick R. Magee, Strategic Leadership Primer (Carlisle Barracks, Pa: US Army War College, 1998), 38.

⁹ Ibid., 41.

¹⁰ Ibid., 42.

¹¹ Roger J. Spiller, Dictionary of American Military Biography (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984), 257.

¹² Markey, 8.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 18.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 21.

¹⁸ Knopf, 121.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Markey, 26.

²¹ Ibid., 34.

²² Ibid.

²³ Knopf, 114.

²⁴ Markey, 50.

²⁵ Ibid., 53.

²⁶ FM 22-100, 7-4.

²⁷ Markey, 53.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Knopf, 122.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ FM 22-100, 7-7.

³² Weigley interview

³³ Markey, 56.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ FM 22-100, 7-6.

³⁸ Markey, 63.

³⁹ Markey, 62.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Blumenson, 177.

⁴² Spiller, 260.

⁴³ Jacob L. Devers, "Major Problems Confronting a Theater Commander in Combined Operations," Military Review, (January 1997): 124.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Blumenson, 197.

⁴⁷ Military Review, 125.

⁴⁸ FM 22-100, 7-12.

⁴⁹ Jacob L. Devers, "Role of the Army in the Future." lecture, Newport, R.I. Naval War College, 11 May 1948. 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 13.

⁵³ Markey, 99.

⁵⁴ Blumenson, 175.

⁵⁵ Carolyn Jenko, "Gen Devers was hero who got little acclaim," York Dispatch, 13 March 2000, p.16.

